1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

584 shillings ; this present " strengthens their bones " (ba tiya marambo) and nothing further remains to be done but to choose the day on which the betrothal visit shall take place. (1)

2) THE BETROTHAL VISITS (Tjekela and koroka).

584 301 This visit (ku ya ku tjekelen) is paid in the following manner. The fiancé chooses his best friend to be his " shangwane " ; the fiancée does the same on her side, and these two " shangwane " must do their best to help them both during the whole of these complicated ceremonies. Then the bridegroom summons, together with his shangwane, three or four other friends of his own age, and a little lad to carry their mats. They go and bathe and put on their finest attire : rich skins, bracelets hung to their belts, horse-hair necklaces with white beads threaded here and there which swing to and fro on neck and breast. Neither do they forget their small shields of skin, which give them a martial appearance without, however, suggesting any thought of war or strife. Before starting they take a good meal cooked at home. In the evening, after sunset, they reach the village of the fiancée. They sit down outside the gate and cough to make known that they have arrived. Then the inhabitants, who were expecting them, come out to meet them and beg them to enter. The visitors make difficulties. They pretend not to wish to do so. The people of the village insist. At last, with apparent reluctance, they advance into the central square. A hut is prepared for them, and they are invited to go and rest there. They begin by refusing. But the young girls take out of their hands their sticks and their miniature shields and carry them into the hut. At last, with a

393 584 574

(1) Amongst the Wa-Nyika (a tribe dwelling between the Nyassa and Tanganyika lakes) the betrothal takes place as follows: A female messenger is sent by the suitor's parents to the girl's parents. She brings with her a hoe. The father calls the girl and shows her the tool saying: "This is your hoe; it comes from so and so." If the girl looks at the hoe with a gloomy expression and leaves the hut slowly, still looking at it, it is a sign that she does not accept the proposal. Should she on the contrary cover her face with her hands and run away without looking at the hoe, she thus declares that she consents to become the wife of the boy. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*. January 1926).

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

584 574 836 bored air, they enter. Mats are brought and unrolled before them ; this is the act of hospitality par excellence. They remain standing as if they had no wish whatever to sit down. The girls entreat them to rest, and finally they consent to accept the hospitality offered them with such insistence.

The parents of the fiancée then come, squat near them and ask news of their home. They answer, and inquire about the health of their hosts. This is the *djungulisana*, the exchange of greetings which always takes place when a visitor is received. Soon however large pots of well prepared food are brought. " No ", say the young men. " We have eaten at home, we are not hungry. " The same comedy is gone through again ; the masters of the place insist, the guests refuse systematically according to the Native laws of civility—or incivility! The night, however, has come ; the young men have consented after all to partake of the feast. The old people retire to their huts to sleep ; the young girls remain. The custom requires them to spend the whole night with the young men, according to the law of the *shigango* previously spoken of. The bridegroom's shangwane chooses the bride's shangwane and all the other boys choose their girl. But the fiancée hides behind her friends and takes no part in these games.

584 574 In the early morning the young men go to bathe and the girls, their amphoras on their heads, go to fetch water from the lake. On their return they perform another act of hospitality towards their visitors, namely, they throw water down their backs. The boys wash the whole of their bodies, after which the girls anoint them with fat. The day is spent in a pleasant *far niente*. The fiancé and his friends sit in the shade in the square, clad in all their ornaments. They hum songs, they amuse themselves by swaying to and fro as they sit ; the little girls keep them company. Meanwhile the elder girls prepare savoury food for them and go to the fields. Towards evening, the visitors ask to see the parents, to take leave of them ; but the old people send the following message : " No, you shall not see us. We cannot consent to your going away, we have hardly seen you. Spend another night with us. " They must make up their mind to stay a little longer.

584 574 On the appointed day, they go and sit outside the village of the fiancé and cough to announce their presence. The same strange proceedings begin, but this time it is the damsels who make difficulties and the young men must beg and entreat them to enter first the village, then the hut, and then to sit on the mats and to accept food. Each of the groomsmen is most attentive to the girl he chose at the preceding meeting and, to obtain her good will, he generally gives her a fowl or the equivalent in money. In the early morning the visitors rise, go and get water, warm it a little and pour it into basins before the doors of the huts, so that, on that day, the inhabitants of the village will make their ablutions with water fetched by them. Then they go and do feminine work, acting as servants of the fiancé's parents. Thus they remove the ashes from the fire-place and throw them on the ash-heap close by; they cut the wood for the young men's mothers and light the several fires of the village. They pretend to leave when the sun sets, but no one will hear of it, and they must spend another night. At last, on the following day, they go home, accompanied by the young men and again, at parting, knot grasses together. On the day of the *koroka* definite arrangements are made for the wedding.

3) Taboos of the betrothal period.

584 574 784 262 The two families which enter into relation with each other by marriage must observe many taboos (See Part II). Here are some of those which are enforced during the visits of *tjekela* and *koroka*:

1) The visitors must not eat all the mealie corn on the spike; they must leave a few grains on it.

2) They must not tear off the leaves which are round the spike. When they have eaten all the corn, they rearrange these leaves in such a way that the cob seems not to have been touched.

3) They must not " make a hole in the pot " (bobota hotjo), viz. they leave a portion of the liquid in the beer pot, they do not empty it entirely.

4) It is forbidden to return home in rain when one has gone

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

584 574 784 262 to *tjekela*. You must wait for fine weather, otherwise it is an insult to the future father-in-law.

5) If, during the visit, you eat monkey nuts, you must not take off the thin skin which covers the kernel.

6) The suitor—the owner of the oxen—must not eat black fish that day. Only his friends have the right to do so. These fish, a kind of barbel, are to be found in the lakes (as that of Rikatla) and in the Nkomati river. The suitor will not partake of them for fear lest the girl he wishes to marry should slip through his hands like a fish. Moreover this fish is black: it might bring darkness, unhappiness.

7) Neither must he eat honey during his visit, because honey like the black fish, is slippery... Honey flows...

8) He is also forbidden to eat fowls, because cocks and hens scratch the soil with their claws, scattering it about; thus the marriage " might be scattered (hangalasa bukati) before it is ripe ". In the Tembe clans, formerly, any solid food was taboo until the families had killed an ox for the feasts.

These taboos are not the proper taboos of a marginal period, as if the betrothal were considered as one of these periods. They are family taboos, belonging to the category of those dictated by the mutual distrust of two allied families.

585 The wedding feast consists of two parts: the *lobola feast*, viz. all the ceremonies connected with the remittance of the lobolo which takes place at the bride's village, and the *tlhoma*, viz. the bringing the bride to the bridegroom's village. Should the lobolo have been entirely paid at once, these two ceremonies will follow each other without much delay. If the sum of money or the number of oxen is not complete, the *tlhoma* will very probably be postponed.

4) Lobola feast.

a) Preparations.

585 273 On both sides, the friends are informed that the feast is close at hand. The bride's family in particular must prepare in good time, as they have to provide the beer which will be consumed in

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

585 time it is for good! At last! " Ba mu tlhomile! " that is to say : her parents have duly settled her in her home.

In Nondwane this last surprise is spared the bridegroom. The bride comes to his home on the day of the marriage with her two mats, accompanied by a young girl only, and some days later the mother and female relations bring the rest of her trousseau and erect the wood pile. The young bride, when she has definitely accepted her fate and consented to stay, is called *ntlhoñwa* (Ro.) *nhlomi* (Dj.) (the one who has been brought to her husband). During the first week, she will fill all the pots of the people of the village so that when they awake they will find water for their ablutions and say : " We have found a bride ! (He kumi ntlhoñwa!) " ; she will remove all the ashes from the fire-places, and smear all the huts.

The first night when she sleeps in the hut with her husband, she may refuse to allow him his conjugal rights. The bridegroom then goes to his father and asks him what he ought to do under the circumstances. The father says : " Give her sixpence or a shilling. " Then she consents! (Mboza).

III. *Marriage customs in other Ronga clans.*

The description which we have just given may be considered as typical, but there are many variations to be noticed amongst the clans.

584 836 574 In the *Maputju* country, South of Delagoa Bay, there are two informal visits, one of the fiancé, one of the fiancée, to each other's village (ku bona muti). This visit is very short, and they do not accept any food from their hosts. Then the *tjekela* of the boys (the betrothal visit) takes place. They behave in a very dignified manner, do not accept any food the first day and consent to eat on the following day only after having been presented with a gift of 10/ or £ 1! During this visit the girls put 500 reis or sixpence at the bottom of the pots which they fill with water for the ablutions of the boys, otherwise the visitors would say : " The water is too cold. We cannot use it. " Sexual

584 836 574 relations between boys and girls during these visits were not allowed in former times. Nowadays they are indulged in, and it may be that the fiancé will ask his fiancée to give herself to him " to test her love " (ku kamba lirandju). If she refuses, the whole affair may be compromised.

584 574 When the girls go to *tjekela* in their turn, they also observe great formality. Money must be given at least ten times to obtain their consent :

1) They refuse to enter the village.
2) To leave the square and go to the hut.
3) To cross the door of the hut.
4) To sit down on the mats. When the other girls consent, the fiancée remains standing.
5) She consents to sit down when given a shilling.
6) They refuse to answer the greetings.
7) When the others have answered, the fiancée still refuses to do so.
8) They do not consent to give news of their home.
9, 10) They still make difficulties about accepting food.

It may be that the fiancé goes to work in the mines during this period, probably in order to complete his lobolo. When he comes back, a special ceremony is performed which is called *hlomula mutwa*, to remove the thorn. The girls pay him a visit. He sits down amidst his companions, having fixed in his hair a long white thorn made of bone. The shangwane of the fiancée (chief bridesmaid) approaches him, dancing, and removes it. This is a way of saluting him on his return, it means the removal of the fatigue and the sufferings he has undergone, of the thorns which have wounded him.

585 The concluding ceremonies of *thloma* and of the *shigiyane* are also more developed in the Maputju country and in Nondwane.

This is the custom in *Nondwane*. Girls accompany the new bride to the conjugal home. They go to the bush to which she has fled, capture her there, and bring her to her husband with songs of mourning (hi ku djila nwana). " Where are you going ? You go to a husband whose heart is jealous! You will bring a

595 which, in this country, decimate so many herds! Every three
592 years, theirs wives bear children. If they are boys, it is an
361 honour; the village will not lack heirs, neither will the father
556 lack arms to help and to defend him! If they are girls, it means
542 wealth; oxen will come to the family! Their brothers will not lack wives, for the sisters will be sold to provide for the brothers. Meanwhile, the huts are erected, large and small, that of the head of the family being the largest, the *malao*, those of the boys the least well kept.

Let us consider a Ronga favoured by fate, as was Gidja, of the country of Libombo, near Rikatla. His village numbered not less than twenty-four huts, with beautiful shady trees behind; notice the enclosure for the cattle and for the goats on the central place, that for the pigs behind the houses... There are cocks and hens pecking about everywhere, dogs wandering around in search of something to steal, for they receive hardly any food; a crowd of youngsters leading the cattle, and everywhere the noise of the pestles crushing the daily mealies in the large mortars. He walks about proudly in his favoured enclosure, contemplating his prosperity with pleasure. Young men are ready to do the work he gives them to do. He will treat them with beer brewed by his wives. And often the people of the neighbouring villages will join his people for dances and games on the fine square, which is surrounded and enclosed on all sides by huts.

595 And, above all things, in the evening, each of his wives will
556 bring him the pot which she has cooked for him. This is the
574 essential matrimonial duty of the wife. Not one will fail in it. Gidja, the lord of six or seven pots of mealies seasoned with a sauce of monkey nuts, will feast and be satiated (shuta) every day, and that means much, for the inner capacity of a Thonga is something wonderful.

He will become large and stout, and shining, which in South Africa is a sure sign of wealth and nobility. The stouter he gets the more will he be respected. But it can easily be imagined that he cannot alone empty all these pots over which he reigns supreme. He feasts his children, but others too come to pay him visits at the evening hour when they know him to be surround-

556 ed by so many good things! Sycophants are not lacking, "Good
395 evening, son of so and so!" they say. "You are one of the
574 great men of the country." And in return for these and other compliments, the magnanimous Gidja shares his feast with his admirers!

Strangers are crossing the country and inquire where they can be received. "Go to Gidja" they are told. "A ni tshengwe, a fuya tshengwe" viz. "he is the possessor of a harem! He is not killed by famine! He has beer to drink every day! He can give food to poor people. Even then, some of it remains on the plate and is eaten by little boys and dogs in the square. There is always abundance there." And the travellers come and enter (khuleka) his village, after which they will tell in their homes the story of the magnificence of Gidja and extol his hospitality.

Thus the man who has succeeded in life becomes famous, his advice will carry weight in the discussions in which he takes part; he will perhaps be even more esteemed than the chief himself, though he does not enjoy the special prestige which the royal family owes to the blood running in its veins.

Conclusion: the greatness of an African is before all else a matter of pots, and the matter of pots is closely connected with polygamy!

885 During these years of mature age the evolution of a man is not
554 marked by special ceremonies. There is one custom however which is common to all, and which marks an advance in their social position. It is that of fixing the wax ring.

II. *Fixing the wax ring.*

885 Amongst the Soüth Africans, the crown is not the appanage of
177 royalty. All men having reached mature age have the right to
554 adorn themselves with it. It is true, it is not a diadem of precious
301 stones, but a large ring of wax. This custom seems to have a Zulu origin. The Ba-Sutho do not know it and the Ba-Thonga, who all practise it, have taken it from the conquering tribe which owes its fortune to the famous Chaka. This habit has spread all

765 this between his great toes. He bends his body and rubs the
783 two great toes against one another. Then he turns his back to
604 the place and goes away. He must not look behind : it is taboo. Then the other relatives say : " Let us all go and *luma milomo*. " He has given them the right to do so.

765 A little of the *milomo* is carefully kept in a pot for months.
783 When relatives who were absent on the day of the death come back from Johannesburg or from elsewhere, they must perform this ceremony before entering the village and eating any food in it. " Ba yila muti " — " they are taboo to the village." The rule applies only to relatives. Other people may very well eat from the deceased's store of food without any harm, as its contamination is dangerous only to his family. Another variety of this rite consists in preparing light beer with the mealies of the dead and taking first one mouthful which must be spat out on the right side, then a second one on the left side, after which one is allowed to drink.

765 The *gardens* of the deceased must also be purified, and this is
783 done by the rite called *baninga mabele*, to give light to the mealies.
415 The widows and all the female relatives go to his fields holding an old and empty *shikutja*. The shikutja is the hard shell of a sala fruit, the size of an orange, in which has been kept the provision of vegetable *tihuhlu* fat (see Part [illegible]) and which is still impregnated with it. The women set fire to it and walk through the gardens holding it up and illuminating the fields. This is perhaps in relation to the idea that death means darkness, and that its contamination is " black " (ntima) so long as the cleansing has not taken place.

765 During the five days of the Great Mourning, relatives and
574 friends come to pay the *official mourning visit* (1). They enter the village, the women shouting their lamentations (mikulungwana). Some one leads them to the grave and they walk round it uttering cries of mourning, taking leave of the deceased. At the burial of Sokis, I heard a woman saying with a trembling voice : " Goodbye! You have gone! Do not forget us. Remember Mulalen."

(1) This visit can be paid one, two, or three months later on, because, as they say, " nkosi a pei boli, " — " the mourning does not get rotten." But it is only during the five days that dances take place.

765 574 177 273 Mulalen was Sokis' little daughter. They bring with them presents, five hundred reis, a hen, a goat, some light beer, perhaps a mat for the widow because hers has been thrown away or a piece of mourning cloth. The inhabitants receive them politely, and spread mats on the ground for them. They tell each other the news (djungulisana). Then after having *luma*, they eat and drink. The Ba-Ronga have their drink already prepared: it is the red wine 765 533 which Banyan merchants sell to them all over the country. The visitors get drunk. They dance, and the mourning ceremony turns into an orgy with dances and songs of all kinds. The singing during this Great Mourning consists either of war songs executed by the men, which are very impressive, or of ordinary dancing songs, the licentious ones being particularly appropriate and being performed by women. (Annotatio 9). - In fact they are the proper mourning songs, those which are specially chosen when it is wished duly to lament a great man. I have witnessed these performances at a mourning ceremony of the " breaking of the hut " and shall refer to this subject again. In Vol. II. Part V Ch. II. B. 1 shall quote some of the mourning songs which have a peculiar stoic character. Here are two others from a collection made by Mrs Audéoud, the wife of one of our missionaries. They were sung at the death of the chief Tshutsha, near Makulane in the Maputju country. One of these was a war song accompanied with drums. It sounded as follows :

1 [See p. 511 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

consequence of the death. If it be the hut of one of the subordinates, the roof is simply lifted off and thrown away into the bush.

Another very significant rite in connexion with the closing of the hut is accomplished on the death of the master of the village. A branch is cut from the tree of the village, the tree which was revealed by the divinatory bones as the one near which the headman had to build (See Part II Ch. II) ; half of the branch is placed across the great gate of the village, which is then closed and another gate opened, at some distance, in the fence ; the other half is put over the door of the crushed hut.

There seem to be great variations in the performance of these ceremonies everywhere. I believe, without being able to vouch for it, that when two family gatherings take place during this last period of the mourning, the first is held to proclaim the new master of the village and the second to distribute the inheritance amongst the heirs-at-law. At any rate these two important acts take place at the gatherings. As the inheritance consists mainly of live stock — human stock, the wives of the deceased, I shall describe the adjudication when treating of the fate of widows.

2) Family rites in the Northern clans.

A month after the burial, there is a first gathering of the grave-diggers. They are invited by the widows to a beer-feast. This beer is called : "the beer of the hyenas," as the hyenas also dig graves! No equivocal compliment is intended, the widows merely meaning to thank these men for their services.

In the northern clans, *yindlu a yi yili*, the hut is not taboo. It can be slept in again after the five days of the Great Mourning. The plaster of the doorposts is repaired, and a new crown is put on the top when the hut again finds an owner (1). The feast of the

(1) The hut of a leper alone is considered irremediably tabooed as the sufferer is buried in it. They dig a hole into which he is pushed by means of sticks. The roof is crushed down over him.

361 231 331 343 air circulate, is the goats' kraal (19). It may be placed somewhere else, behind the huts, for instance ; or sometimes goats are tethered every night by the leg to sticks round the hubo. The pigs are never kept on the hubo, but always behind the hut : they are newcomers in the Thonga village and have hardly yet won their "droit de cité." Let us salute, as we pass by, the tree (25) which

361 824 782 351 is, as we shall see, the mystical stem of the village. We may perhaps see, hanging upon it, a piece of clothing offered to the gods, or at its base a broken pot which is the *gandjelo*, the altar of the village. The gandjelo is often placed, by preference, among the poles of the main entrance on the right. The village tree, which has a ritual significance, is not to be confounded with the trees of the hubo (26), which are but *mindjuti*, shade-trees, under which the inhabitants are fond of sitting.

361 595 So we reach the main hut which faces the gate. This is the dwelling of the headman. In hut 3 lives his second wife, in 4, his third and in 5 his fourth. 2 is called *shilubelo*. Great personages, men owning a large kraal, like to build such a hut, which is smaller than the ordinary ones and where no woman sleeps. It is the headman's own hut, where people *luba*, viz., pay their homage to him; a kind of office of the master of the village! He may sleep in it and summon his wives to come to him there. But he generally prefers to sleep in his wives' huts, one month in each, according to the polygamic custom.

361 343 351 596 Behind 4 and 10 is a *mhala*, a shed for the implements. It is built, like the goats' kraal, without plaster walls, and is smaller than a hut. There may be three or four of these in the village. The headman and his wives occupy the back of the village. At the sides live his younger brothers, one, who has two wives, in 7 and 8, two others, those who have but one wife each, in 9 and in 10 respectively. In 11 lives a married son; in 12 it may be a nephew, son of the headman's sister, or a son-in-law; (see page 252). 13 might be the hut of a stranger (mulubeti), who has

361 574 783 asked permission to stay with the headman of the village, as he wished to be under his protection. The case is not frequent, but may occur, and in order to be received into the mystic unity of the community, this man will have to "hlamba ndjaka" (See page 153), together with all the inhabitants of the kraal.

621 10) Having closed the village in this way, she *performs a sacrifice*.
595 She sips a mouthful of water from a tumbler, spitting out a
782 portion of it (phahla) towards the people ; then she washes her hands, and throws a little of the water towards them in order *to give them* the village. This act is accompanied by the following words : "Be not tied by the village! Bring forth children ; live and be happy and get everything. You gods, see! I have no bitterness in my heart. It is pure. I was angry because my husband abandoned me, he said I was not his wife ; he loved his younger wives. Now, this is finished in my heart. We shall have friendly relations together..." The prayer being concluded, the headman goes to the main entrance, pushes the thorny branch aside, and opens the village.

621 11) The last act is the *khangula*, the *inauguration ceremony*.
574 Beer is prepared, neighbours are invited and they all drink together, the neighbours coming *to see the new village* (ku bona muti).

As regards the old one, when the moving has been accomplished through the back door widened for the purpose, one of the inhabitants closes the main entrance with a branch. Hence comes the expression which is applied to a village all of whose inmates have died, and which has, on that account, disappeared : "Those people have all died and there was not even one left to close the gate."

II. *In the Ba-Ronga Clans.*

621 The sequence of rites for the removal of a village is very
787 much the same as in the Northern clans.

824 1) The headman examines some spots and consults the bones :
765 "Must I built at such and such a tree ?"

2) When the tree has been designated, he goes to it and places at its foot his furniture (nyundju) and his instrument of worship, his altar, (a pot, a jar, see Part VI). The altar may be placed at the main entrance later on, if the bones so order it. As already mentioned, there will be a mystic relation between him and that tree. He must never cut it down. If any of the branches should be

462 273 thank (tlangela) her husband for his kind help! This is her method of notifying him that all the grain has been harvested, as, whatever the man's share of the work may have been, the mealies belong to him.

462 356 342 The main work of the man is the *building and repairing of the huts*. This is truly an arduous job, but it is not of yearly recurrence. Every third or fourth year they are obliged to re-thatch the roof. The huts are built and repaired during the winter, from May to September.

A second domain, which is exclusively man's, is the *care of the cattle* ; the boys milk the cows, construct and repair the kraal : the little boys herd the goats, and the young men the oxen, as has already been mentioned.

462 411 294 It is also the men who *make all the utensils and tools* used in the village, pots and other crockery excepted ; mortars, pestles, handles for axes or hoes (mimphinyi), wooden platters, carved or forged articles, all this work pertains to them. They must also make the *ntehe* for their wives, or sisters, after the birth of the babies. This is probably the explanation of the curious fact noticed amongst Native Christians, namely that they are much more clever at needlework than their wives. Big fellows are often seen forsaking the hoe to work with the needle, and there are fathers who make their own clothing as well as the dresses for their wives and children!

462 224 *Hunting and fishing* are, of course, also men's work... or pastime. For some of them hunting is an actual trade, at least such was the case in former times, before the White Governments imposed strict regulations and levied heavy licences on that sport. We shall study, in Part IV, the curious customs relating to these two favourite occupations of the Natives.

574 517 484 A great part of their time is devoted by the men to *paying visits*. They are very fond of calling on each other, and sometimes they go great distances to see relatives or friends. They do not travel to pay visits only, but they frequently journey to claim payment of their debts (milandju). To regain the possession of a miserable head of cattle they willingly lose whole weeks! And what endless discussions in the *hubo*, when an unfortunate visitor

273 1) Men's favourite pastime in South Africa is *drinking beer*.
275 There are no bars on the velt... But every village is from time
574 to time a brewery and a drinking place. Beer is prepared in large
596 quantities. As we shall see, the brewing lasts about nine days. Near Lourenço Marques, Natives fill not only pots but big casks with it! One of the jugs is put aside for the headman to try it. He must pour a little of it into the *gandjelo* ; this religious act is obligatory. Next day the men of the village assemble in the morning to sample it also, and, at noon, all the friends from the
273 neighbouring villages arrive. Everybody is welcome. Even a
574 leper can take part in the beer-drinking ; but he will come with
596 his own calabash and they will fill it with a special ladle. As a rule near neighbours also bring their calabashes, but people coming from afar are not expected to do so. The beer is drunk with great haste. Before it is all finished, the headman puts aside a pot for his father-in-law, his uterine nephew, and the friend who invited him on a previous occasion... Of course after having filled their stomachs, men and women dance on the hubo in the afternoon, and especially in the evening, when the moon shines ; the shouting sometimes becomes dreadful when drunkenness has overcome all

000 the rain which was pouring down. Suddenly I noticed the Walusangano family returning from the garden in the same order as the week before : in front Leya with the bundle of wood, the basket of vegetables, the hoe and the baby on her back, followed by the children, and behind, the father with the protective umbrella. "Such are the fruits of my efforts." I thought ! But I refused to consider myself beaten. I said to myself : "I will speak to them once more ! The women will certainly be on my side, these poor overworked women !"

On the following Sunday Nesheye (one of the best Christian women of the congregation) came to see me after the sermon. She had something to tell me... She said : "You observe us, and you wonder at certain things. We also, on our side are observing you, and we see things which we also do not understand. When your wife does the washing, you remain standing by and do not help her. With us it is the men who do the washing. Again, we have seen your wife sewing and mending your clothes and the clothes of the children, and you beside her, not thinking of helping her. With us it is the men who mend the clothes."

Having spoken thus, Nesheye put her two hands joined together on the mat, then separated them as if she were cutting something in two, and said to me : "That is the way your forefathers distributed the work, a little heap here and another little heap there ; and they said : This is the work of men and that the work of women. Our forefathers proceeded in the same way, and said : This is men's work and that is women's work... We must leave it so. The Gospel has not to concern itself with these matters. We do not wish to have the reputation of being lazy and you do not wish it either."

(From the *Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, January 1926.)

273 574 622 595

musical instinct. Some days later, another headman invites his neighbours to another beer-drinking, and so they eat and drink together (ba delana, ba nwelana) as long as there is plenty in the storehouses. When provisions become scarce, they begin to spare the mealies. But the advantage of the polygamist becomes apparent here; his storehouses are many and he can feast his friends for many months.

These beer-drinking customs are essentially demoralising; they

[273]

Phot. A. Bérd.

Beer-drinking party in Maputju country.

are one of the curses of primitive Native life. But let me remark that, as the making of the beer takes nine days, these excesses cannot be very frequent, and the habit of drinking wine at the White man's store is ten times more harmful, as in this case alcohol is never lacking. We shall speak later on of alcoholism amongst Natives. (See Part IV.)

276 248

Another pastime, very much appreciated by some, but not so general, is *hemp smoking* and the accompanying *saliva contest*. Hemp (mbange) has been cultivated for a considerable time amongst the Thongas, especially on the coast, not to make ropes, but for smoking.

l: Junod M-S (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

832 576 593 152 572 Even a husband never kissed his wife. On coming back from a journey, a man would hardly greet his wife ; she would see him passing through the village, prepare food for him, and when it was cooked, she would come and salute him by presenting it to him. But if he has a good friend in the village, and if this friend sees him coming back after a long absence, their meeting will be much more touching. The friend will go to the main entrance of the village, exclaim : "Ha-Ha," take his parcel from his hands, put his arms round his shoulders (a ku mu buso hi mandla), remove the perspiration from his face, and pat him gently, saying : "Your ancestor-gods have their eyes open! They have worked well! They have brought you back."

574 609 622 *Hospitality.* When strangers enter a village, men sit on the *bandla*, and women go further on and sit on the *hubo* ; they remain quietly there till the people of the village come and salute them (losa). Should the inhabitants delay too long, the visitors move on, saying : "These people are not good." But this is very rare. Generally the master of the village comes to them, inquiring who they are, whence they come, where they are going, and asks them : "Do you wish to spend the night here ?" If they say : "Yes," the headman will empty one of his huts by putting two of his wives together, and will himself sleep with the visitors. Should there still be food, he will give them some. If not, he says : 574 609 622 203 195 "*Ndlala*!" "Starvation!" After a little while, a mat is unrolled and the official ceremony of "djungulisana" takes place. This is a very amusing custom. The headman sits together with his hosts and enquires about the news of their home. One of the visitors begins in a monotonous tone and pours forth volubly a flow of words with a peculiar cadence and almost without taking breath. His interlocutor interrupts him after each sentence, with "Ahina, hina," that is to say "Indeed, indeed!" till the whole skein is unwound ; the two men finish with a longer "*Hina*," the inhabitants of the hut adding an emphatic "*khani*," a heartfelt "thank you ;" then the master of the village begins to relate his own news in the same tone. It is impossible to 574 609 imagine anything more curious than this "mélopée" in two parts. This law of hospitality is general all over the tribe. Should

574/609 travellers be refused the customary hospitality in a village and incur misfortune later on, the chief will make the people of that village responsible and they will have to pay a fine. In Gungunyana's country, warriors were sent to plunder such a village. Lack of hospitality, however, is not considered as a taboo (yila), because "it does not kill;" it is a bad action (biha).

Now-a-days, customs are beginning to change; hundreds of young men (magaisa) coming from the towns after working there, pass through the country, and it would be impossible to put them up and feed them all. They sleep on the *bandla* and cook food for themselves, occasionally buying some mealies or a hen from the inhabitants. Moreover they have plenty of money and they can pay!

609 It must also be added that, if they dispense hospitality liberally,
618 the Thongas can be very hard on people who do not belong to
761 their special clan. Feelings of humanity are sometimes strangely deficient. I heard of a boy of the Manyisa district who had fallen down near the lake of Rikatla, unable to proceed further on account of a bad wound received while working on the railway at Lourenço Marques. Nobody took pity on him because he was of another clan, and he would have died there if a Christian woman, named Lois, had not received him in her village and nursed him. Fear of death and its contamination may partly explain this want of compassion for strangers.

784 As already mentioned, it was formerly taboo to enter the
643 village square wearing boots. These boots consist of sandals
677 made by the hunters for their long trips through the thorny bush. They were not allowed on the hubo. A subject was not permitted to sit on a mortar or on anything else; the chief alone could do so, and it was considered a sign of pride to sit on anything but the bare ground!

609 The habit of offering a concubine to passers-by is never met
177 with amongst the Rongas as it is in other tribes. Now-a-days
574 dissolute women may offer themselves. But they have learnt from white men this new kind of immorality.

On the fate of the Thonga Village, see Practical Conclusions. V.

III. *The shipalapala.*

643
534
202

Speaking of the musical instruments of the Court, I must also mention *the trumpet of assembly, shipalapala*, which is the recognised means of summoning the subjects to the capital. The sound of the big drum, though heard at a great distance, cannot reach to the confines of the country. So, when the chief wants his men to assemble at once, he uses the *shipalapala*. This is a horn of mhalamhala, or of nyala or of phifa antelope, the sound of which is like mpu-ù-u (with an accent on the second syllable). The envoy of the chief runs to the capital of a sub-chief, blowing all the time. When he has reached that village, he transmits his message and a young man starts at once with the shipalapala of the sub-chief to another district. So, in a short time, notice is given to the whole tribe to assemble.

IV. *Visitors.*

643
609
574

When a stranger passes through the capital, he must sit down outside the central square and at some little distance from it. Some one will come and inquire what he wants; he replies: "I come from such and such a country, and I wish to pay my respects to the chief." Then the counsellor or "Agent General" charged with the affairs of the traveller's country will come and converse with him and announce him (bika) to the chief, who will receive him affably and possibly assign him a hut to sleep in, in case he wishes to stay the night, at the same time providing him with food. Should the chief be particularly well disposed towards his guest, he will kill a calf or even an ox for him; and he, on his return, will speak in praise of the hospitality he has received, saying: "The chief made me share his reign," literally: "He made me reign, (a ndji fumisile)." Such is the procedure when the respective countries of guest and host are adjoining and the tribes

643 on good and friendly terms. Should relations between them be
609 at all strained, or should war be imminent, all the roads would be
574 closed and no one allowed to enter the capital.

V. *The Kondza custom.*

641 The chief is also approached by those who may wish to become
643 subject to him, to be naturalized ; this is called *kondza*, from a Zulu word conveying this meaning. The chief will assign to the new *nandja* a dwelling place, and he will be incorporated in the nation without further ceremony. By this kondza, he binds himself to pay the taxes (See the story of Mutipi. *Les chants et les contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 164).

Naturalised strangers, however, do not eat the first fruits (luma) with the same drug as the people of the country. They have their own medicine and take it according to their own rules. They are however forbidden to luma before the chief of their adopted land (p. 397).

VI. *Diplomatic relations.*

648 We have seen that these are very carefully conducted, each
202 of the neighbouring clans having one counsellor entrusted with
726 the care of its affairs. In case of war, friendly clans frequently
224 make alliances (shinakulobye). They send messages to each other, or they have special means of communicating news in case of war. Supposing, for instance, Nwamba and Nondwane should fight against Matjolo. They put two traps at their common boundary, on the side of the road, one on the territory of Nwamba and one on that of Nondwane. These traps consist of a rod bent by a string fastened to the ground. Should the army of Matjolo have made an invasion during the night into Nwamba territory and put the people to flight, the men of Nwamba

685 721 *Theft* (ku yiba) is universally condemned, not so much for its immoral character as for the fact that it renders a normal social life impossible. The notion of *individual property*, though it is not developed as in more civilised nations, is nevertheless at the base of the whole Bantu system. The Bantus are agriculturists. They believe that the products of their labour belong to them and that no one else is entitled to appropriate them. The notion of property is in direct relation to work accomplished. (Compare Part IV.)

685 574 202 To steal growing mealies is not usual. A thief breaks off the cob, whilst the master of the field first uproots the stalk and then takes the cobs. If a friend of his who happens to be travelling passes through his gardens and wants to eat a cob, he is quite welcome to do so. He also uproots the stalk, puts it on one side of the road or leans it against a tree and draws a line on the ground from the place where the stalk grew to the spot where he has put it. Perhaps the owner of the field will discover the uprooted stalk after a whole month. If he inquires who has helped himself to his mealies, his friend will say to him : "Did you not see the line ?" And they will laugh over it (hlekelelana). A thief acting hastily would not have had time to draw the line!

685 789 There are certain magical drugs with which people smear mealie stalks (see Part IV) and they assert that, if any one tries to penetrate into their garden to steal, he will have his hand caught and will not be able to get rid of the plant! For some reason or another, these magical methods do not always work. So the injured person has recourse to the tribunal.

685 343 Should the thief be caught in the very act, there is no difficulty! His own field will be taken by the owner of the stolen mealies and he will have to pay a fine of one ox, otherwise the matter will be brought before the Court, and the only difference will be that the fine will be of two or three oxen, one of which will remain in the hands of the chief. (Mankhelu.) If the thief has been clever enough to avoid being caught, if he has stolen from a store hut, Natives are clever detectives and he will probably be discovered. These store huts are generally built in the middle of the field, or in the little bush which surrounds the village ; the grass all around

of the garden with a good vegetable until the first-fruits themselves ripen and furnish a more substantial food. 241 221

When the rains commence, sometimes as early as September, but generally later, it is *time to begin the regular sowing*. Everybody then starts for himself, because, although the fields tilled by the mother are the largest, every member of the family has tilled his own : the husband has his *mpashu* (I. p. 337) and each girl has her plot.

The Native idea is that every owner of a field must sow all principal cereals and vegetables in his garden, except peas, on account of their taboo. So, in a line on the border, are planted sweet potatoes and manioc. Mealie seeds are sown at a given distance from each other, alternating with Kafir corn and sorghum, and in between are planted ground nuts and beans. Watch how the mistress of the field proceeds to sow her maize : she walks along with short steps, at each one digging up a shovelful of well tilled earth, and planting in the holes three or four grains of maize, which she carefully covers over. The work is done in haste so as to take advantage of the last rains. The *lisindje* is first sown ; then begins the hasty tilling of the old fallow fields (pula, dji-ma). The crop is not likely to be so plentiful as that obtained from virgin soil, but the same fields can be used for three or four consecutive years before they become exhausted.

Natives have no idea of *fertilising the ground* in any way whatever ; at the most they may take advantage of the manure which has accumulated in some disused oxen kraal, to plant thereon a few gourds or some tobacco.

The operation of hastily tilling the fallow fields is often carried on by a *djimo* (dji-ma). Knowing that her fallows are very large and that she can hardly cope with them by herself, the owner calls all her neighbours to a djimo, viz., a working party, having wisely prepared a number of large jugs of beer. Neighbours will certainly accept the invitation as they may have to ask for similar help later on. So they come in the morning, and attack the fields with energy, singing and shouting all the time. There are special djimo songs, in particular amongst the Ba-Sutho. One may see them, some fifty black bodies toiling vigorously, 241 476 574 [533]

241 making the sand fly, their hoes working with marvellous rapidity!
476 What excitement, what strenuous work, each one urging the
574 other to still greater exertion and all hurrying to finish the job! They know that, there in the hut, ten big jars of beer brewed to a nicety wait for them, and that they will have a good time at midday, when the heat will be unbearable and the work done.

241 The maize grows and the weeds grow with it ; after the tilling
221 comes the *weeding* ; this is the work for November, December and January.

It is done twice or thrice for the mealies. The first weeding is called *tjutja*, and is done when the mealie stems have reached a height of about one foot. The second is called *hlakula*. By this time the ground nuts and beans have grown, and this weeding is intended to be for their benefit also.

In January it is the *nwebo*, the time for the first ears of maize to ripen : it is also at that time that the fields of maize are apt to be ravaged by a species of coleoptera, called the *nunu*, of which I shall have more to say when treating of the superstitions of the tribe.

In January also the sorghum and millet attain their full growth, and the grain begins to form. *Sparrows*, *finches*, and other chattering birds take up their residence in the fields and begin to plunder them. Then women and children camp out from morning to night, in their plantations, and spend three whole months shouting, yelling and making a most infernal hullabaloo, with tin cans and other musical instruments, in their endeavour to scare the thieves. This is what they call *psaya* or *rindja tinyanyana*. The flocks of sparrows, etc., move on at a single flight to the acacias or mimosas, close by, whence they make a descent on the fields of the next neighbour. This proprietress is also on guard, and, in her turn, drives off the birds with a frightful uproar ; thus the duel between birds and human beings goes on for weeks. The mother and children prevail upon the father to build them a little hut (ntjonga-mi) right in the middle of the field, to enable them to protect their sorghum against the feathered enemy, and there they take up their quarters until the cereals have ripened and are ready to be harvested.

these several loads!) It is made in much the same way as the roof of a hut, point downwards, ribs of folioles taking the place of sticks. This basket may be said to be the special property of the women (1) : they are very clever at balancing it on their heads ; it is very rarely that a woman, old or young, lets her shihundju fall. When empty it is turned upside down and serves as a hat. It is a really pretty sight to see the young girls starting out for the fields with their conical baskets standing straight up on their fuzzy locks. When they are travelling and arrive at a friendly village, they hold themselves perfectly upright, shooting glances here and there without stooping or turning their heads, till their friends rush out to meet them, seize their shihundju and place them on the ground, in small holes which they hastily make in the sand. This is the first duty of hospitality amongst women!

285 482 574

The *lihlelo* (No. 8), is used by cooks for winnowing the maize. Palm leaves not being sufficiently strong for this purpose, the lihlelo is made of the roots, of a tree called *nukanhlelo* (a kind of mimosa), cut into strips, and is coated with a reddish brown varnish prepared from mangrove bark. It is the lihlelo, or rather a smaller basket of the same sort called *ndjewane*, that the housewife takes with her when picking the small wild cucumbers, or gathering the various herbs which serve for the supplementary noontide luncheon.

285 415 243

In the northern clans one often meets with a spherical basket made of the same material as the winnowing basket and covered with an ordinary lihlelo.

285

Besides the foregoing, the Ba-Ronga have two or three baskets which are not in such general use : the *nhlaba*, a kind of plaited bag with interstices between the palm straws, for carrying fish, the *ntjaba*, etc.

Another article, which might, at first sight, be taken for a basket, but which serves quite a different purpose, is the *nhluto*, the strainer. (No. 1.) This unusually shaped strainer is a sort of long bag of plaited straw into which is poured the beer made

285 415 273

(1) The male members of the family are called "ba matlhari, those of the assagai" and the female "ba-shihundju, those of the basket," as these objects are characteristic of each sex.

1 [See p. 124 -- Analyst]

train was heard in the distance. One of my servants was busy cleaning the pots ; I heard him muttering the following words : 195

The one who roars in the distance... The one who crushes in pieces the braves and smashes them ! The one who debauches our wives : they abandon us, they go (to the towns to lead a bad life) ! The seducer ! And we remain alone.

He was extolling the huge thing and lamenting his misfortune and the curse it has brought upon the country.

IV. *Satiric poetry.*

I have already mentioned the peculiar custom of Thonga literati of speaking in a round-about fashion, and using figurative language, especially when they want to say something disagreeable or to give vent to their humour. It is but one step from such forms to satire. They generally indulge in this satiric vein when dealing with relatives-in-law, women being especially prone to it. When the sisters and aunts of a married woman go to pay a visit to her, they convey all kinds of equivocal compliments. These must not be taken seriously! It is a round-about — exceedingly round-about — way of making graceful allusions and expressing their mutual esteem. I will quote the series of these songs of friendly chaff and invective as it was given to me by Shigiyane, with a running commentary to render them comprehensible. These lively and pointed choruses give a fitting finishing-touch to the marriage customs, and illustrate the curious relations existing between allied families, which I explained in Vol. I, p. 249-253. 533 195 574 576 539

On the wedding day the women who take the bride to her husband sing the *tjeka song* : 585 533 539

Let us go with her, but let us go back to our homes!

This is an ironical way of saying : "She is going to find trouble : we won't follow her as far as that!." The same idea runs through all the songs which these women sing during the next few days.

585 When they accompany the bride to her new home, they sing :

533 U ya kwi, Mamano ! — Whither goest thou, mother ?
539 U ya kwi shana ? — Whither goest thou ?
574 Ba ta tshaha shihundju ni lihlelo, mamano !
They will bring thee the basket full of maize and the fan, my mother !
Ba ta kuma u tlokoli, ba tlokolisa, mamano !
When thou hast finished crushing it, they will make thee crush it again, my mother !
Ba ta kuma u kopoli, ba kopolisa, mamano !
When thou hast plastered the floor, they will make thee plaster it again, my mother !

But when they come on a visit, carrying jars of beer as presents to the newly married couple, they are much less guarded in their language, ridiculing the poor husband and his family, and making fun of every one in general. They begin singing on the way, with the jars on their heads :

He ntshonga, banhwanyana, he nga [illegible]anana
He la libango ; fa hi nga labi, we manyana.
Ku laba manyana ka ñwan'a manyana.
We are a small band, young girls ; there are few of us.
We are looking for a piece of meat on the spit ; formerly we should not have known where to find any, our sister (so and so) !
Now our sister will get some for us from her husband !

Hi kokobisa lobe, hi ya kwihi shana ?
Hi bhambe ba ku yalwa !
He fambaka ni khombo, ni khombo dji le kaya !
Where are we going, thus dragging the hook behind us ? (1)
We are the people that are hated.
We walk in misfortune (2), the misfortune that has befallen our house !

Ka ku kandja ñwana a ku na kule.
Wo khunga he lihanyi, we koko !
Ya kokowela : kowe-kowe-kowe.
Where a daughter lives it cannot be very far off.
Go there, grannie, limping and leaning on thy staff !
Listen to the hen cackling. She says : kowe, kowe, kowe. (3)

[222] (1) They compare themselves to women who have been in the fields, picking kwakwa fruits (p. 17), and are so heavily laden that they cannot carry the hook used for pulling the fruit off the trees ; they have had to tie it to their belt, and drag it behind them on their way home. The travellers give it to be understood that they are not out for pleasure !

(2) That of having to go and see a brother-in-law who ill-treats their sister.

(3) This line is an encouragement to the old woman who finds the walk long and tiring. The other women promise her a fowl at the end of their journey, which the son-in-law will kill for her. Note the first line of the third verse : it is a kind of proverb.

On arriving at the village they stop at the edge of the stream : 585 533 539 574

Fulamelani, banhwanyana, hi ya nwa mati nkobeni.
Stoop down, young women, let us drink water in the valley.

Finally they settle themselves in the home of their *bakoñwana*, their relatives-in-law, and begin to insult their hosts.

Ba yala na wo mbengana loko a boleka !
Ba li : " Famba, u ya teka kwenu u buya wa ta sila ".
Ba yala ni shudana, ba yala ni musana
Ba li : " U ya teka kwenu u buya wa ta tlokola. "
They won't lend (our sister) a grindstone when she wants to borrow one.
They say to her : " Go home and fetch one and then come back and grind. "
They won't lend her the small pestle and mortar.
They say : " Go home and get your own, and then come back and crush your maize. "

Then they make fun of the mother-in-law, who is whispering with the other women of the village, making arrangements, doubtless, for the good entertainment of the visitors. They pretend to discover in these asides some terrible plot.

A li ñwono-ñwono ! Mabulela ya nsati lweyi ! Hi file ! Hi lobile !
That woman over there is whispering ! What can she be saying !
We are dead ! We are lost !

As for the head of the village, these shrewish visitors accost him thus :

Ñwenyi wa muti, hi wene ? A ku hi hi mati, hi ñwene ?
A he hlayi wone, ya nhlobo ! Hi hla byala ne sope !
Are you the master of the village ? Are you not going to give us any water to drink ?
We don't mean well-water ; we mean beer and brandy !

The villagers approach to salute the new-comers, who sulk and refuse to say a word. Large pots are made ready for cooking food.

Mi kokela matambeko, mi kokela bamane ?
Kambe hi balala, hi nga ka manyana !
You prepare the large pots... For whom are you making them ready ?
We are enemies, we are !

585 The young folks catch fowls in order to feast them properly
583 They raise objections.
589
574

A hi djyale kwee ! A hi djyale kwee !
Hi djyale nkoka-hi-pindja !
We will have nothing to do with that which cries kwee. (The cry of the fowl when being killed.)
We want the animal which is led with a string (a goat).

But it is the husband who has to put up with the worst insults.

Ha ! matinga-tingela ya ehuma hwe ! Loko a hi bona a ku tlhanya pirubu.
Ah ! see how he wants to avoid us ! As soon as he sees us he runs and hides behind the houses ! (He is afraid of us !)
Hi laba tima-mbilu ! hi djyala mafura ya ku nona phobo.
We want something to satisfy the heart ! We must have our fat very rich !
Nyoka ya nyoka ! Mbyana ya mbyana ! Yi whee !
Serpent that thou art ! Dog that thou art ! Thou sayest bow-wow !

Then to show him that they really like and appreciate him, they add, with the true untutored rudeness which they maintain to the end of the visit :

A ku hi lobolele ? Na wena, hana ha ku ha ku lobolela ki khume ni atlhanu !
Won't you buy another wife from us ! Later on your daughters will bring you a dowry worth fifteen pounds sterling !

Finally, after having had plenty to eat and to drink and a good dance, they will remark, on leaving :

Hi tlhome nyonga ya mbuti, hi muka
Twine the goat's bladder in our hair, that we may go home.

All this is not very high-flown poetry. The general intercourse between relatives-in-law is by no means refined and this rudeness contrasts with the ordinary civility of Native life. Let us remember that this way of speaking is not intended to show a want of politeness on the part of the visitors, but, on the contrary, is the behaviour suited to the occasion! I have the music of some of these songs, which were noted down by Mrs Audéoud, in Maputju. In No. 13, the bridesmaids actually exhort the bride not to follow her husband! But they are the last to expect her to follow their advice.